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AUTHOR Wang, Xiao
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ABSTRACT

For both reading and writing, context and perspective are everything; Ann Berthoff suggests that students "write continuously in a double-entry notebook." One instructor has utilized Berthoff's double-entry notebook in a technical writing class and finds that this classroom practice has also been informed by other theories inquiring into writing and composition: theory of meaning, theory of language, theory of learning, and theory of research. These theories manifest themselves in all the assignments and in classroom activities revolving around double-entry notebooks. For the class, six writing assignments which revolve around the final research project are based on the premise that in composition class, Isocrates' notion of Logos is taught--students learn how to combine words and thought, apply what they write to everyday life and problems, and learn how to make meaning through critical reading/writing and collaborative activities. The assignments are: an employment packet; a memo requesting permission for the topic chosen for the research project; a summary packet summarizing pertinent articles; a research proposal of the major project that identifies a problem in their profession; a progress report; and a final formal report of the research project. For each assignment, students are given instructions and model writings to read and analyze by the use of two columns in their double-entry notebook. They are asked to compare notes, comments, and subjective reflections. (NKA)

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Title: Double-Entry Notebook in Technical Writing Class

Dr. Xiao Wang

Ph. D. in Rhetoric and Composition

Professor of English

Broward Community College (two-year community college)

Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

One-thirds of my students in freshman composition and technical writing classes are Afro-Americans who are subdivided into black students from U.S., black students from Haiti, black students from Jamaica, and black students from the Caribbean's.

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Theoretical Rationale

Clifford asserts that in her three texts on imagination and the making of meaning, Ann Berthoff has gone further than most theorists in blending reading and writing theory into a strong classroom praxis (qtd. in McClelland 53). She believes that "the essential significance of criticism in the classroom is that it enables us to teach reading for meaning and writing as a way of making meaning." Since for Berthoff, meaning resides not only in objects but also in relationships, it is "unstable, shifting, dynamic" (Bertoff 42). For both reading and writing, context and perspective are everything; Berthoff suggests that students "write continuously in a double-entry notebook" (Bertoff 45). According to Clifford, this desire for self-inquiry and critical consciousness is indicative of Berthoff's dialectic pedagogy, a strategy where I.R. Richards' "continuing audit of meaning" is central to learning how to read and write critically (qtd. in McClelland 54).

In the teaching of composition, I have utilized Bertoff's Double-Entry Notebook in my technical writing class. In addition to Bertoff's theory of empowering student to make meaning through critical reading and writing, this classroom practice has been informed by other theories inquiring into writing and composition: theory of meaning, a theory of language, a theory of learning, and a theory of research" (Emig 70-71).

First, Bertoff's theory on making meaning through writing and the idea of double-entry notebook encourages an active and student-centered learning. This practice reflects current thinking of transactional rhetoric that knowledge or meaning is socially created through active interaction among students with their prior experiences, the texts, and the writer and that students learn best when they are given the opportunity to

construe knowledge from critical reading and to construct knowledge from writing what is pertinent to their practical world rather than passively absorb what is being lectured. Second, this classroom practice also reflects the theory of the interconnected relationship between language and thought--language plays a significant part in thinking, and writing is a way of thinking; when we teach student writing, we are teaching them how to think critically with language; I.R Richard and Berthoff's triangle and the relationship between meaning--reference-- and language (symbol) states that meaning emerges from active transaction with the texts, and that language and thoughts are inseparable. Third, this classroom practice also reflects the current thinking of collaborative learning advocated by scholars like Kenneth Bruffee. This idea of collaborative learning has been reflected in students' exchanging their double-entry journals about the assigned reading with each other and in students 'reviewing each other's drafts in peer review groups. This classroom practice empowers our students to make meaning through collaborative learning, critical reading and writing, and combining writing and thinking activities in and outside the class. Forth, this classroom practice also reflects current thinking of the interconnected relationship between reading and writing. Robert Scholes believes that writers are always reading, and readers are always writing.

Practice: description of my approach, assignments, and activities

These aforementioned theories manifest themselves in all the assignments and in classroom activities revolving around double-entry notebook. I assign six writing assignments for ENC 2210--technical writing class; all six assignments revolve around the final research project to be turned in at the end of the term about a subject in their own disciplines. These six assignments are based on the premise that in composition

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class, we teach Isocrates' notion of Logos to our students—we teach them to combine words and thought and apply what they write to everyday life and solve everyday problems and that students learn to make meaning through critical reading and writing, collaborative activities, and construing and constructing meaning on their own. The assignments are:

- A employment packet (a chronological resume and a cover letter)
- A memo requesting permission for the topic chosen for the research project
- A summary packet summarizing articles pertinent to the research project
- A research proposal of the major research project that identifies a problem in their profession or major and propose solutions to that problem
- A progress report on the status of their primary and secondary research
- A final formal report of the research project

For each assignment, students are given instructions and model writings to read and analyze by the use of the two columns in their double-entry notebook. Firs, they take notes from class lectures and assigned readings on the left-hand column, then they are asked to write down any questions they have about those notes and requirements for the assignment and their commentary evaluations about strong points and weak points of a particular sample reading. When they come to class, they are asked to compare each other's notes as well as the comments and subjective reflections in the right-hand column in pairs, triads, or groups of four, exchanging ideas and creating new meaning. After each group work, a group leader is asked to report on the results of group analysis about the sample work or articles--sharing with the class the right-hand column information discussed by the group. The following are detailed description of my approach and

activities for each assignment, for which students go through the six activities by using double-entry notebook as detailed in assignment number one.

1. Employment packet:

Activity a. Students are assigned to read the chapter on the basic features of a cover letter and a chronological resume. They are asked to take objective notes while reading about those readings and record them in the left-hand column of their double-entry notebook. If they have any questions about the reading, they are asked to write those questions down in the right-hand column.

Activity b. At the beginning of the class, students are asked to do a focused freewriting on topics such as: what do you understand about the characteristics of a resume and a cover letter? They must write their understanding, questions and reactions in the right-hand column.

Activity c. After ten-minute freewriting, students are asked to read their freewriting in pairs and explain what they understand about the basic features of a cover letter and a resume. They can ask the teacher questions if they have any.

Activity d. Students are asked to read sample resume and cover letter and analyze their strong points and weak points by writing in the right-hand column of their double-entry notebook in groups and have one group leader report their discussion to the class.

Activity e. Students are assigned to prepare a packet of employment—cover letter, resume, and a job advertisement. Students review each other's first and second drafts in peer review groups according to the peer response guide given and jog down the suggestions and comments of their peers in the right-hand column of their double-

entry notebook for revision before they turn in the final version of the employment packet.

2. Memo assignment:

Activity a. students are asked to read the chapter on how to prepare an effective memo at work place, then they will be give several sample memos to analysis regarding the organization as well as the format. In producing this assignment, students will go through the same six activities using double-entry notebook as used in preparing the first assignment in requirements and the revision of their assignment. More importantly, students get a chance to analyze the different aspects of their research project topic—purpose, audience, and scope.

3. Summary packet assignment:

Students are asked to find four articles concerning their topic from the following sources: 1. A professional journal--New England Journal of Medicine fro a topic on "hip fracture." a general interest magazine--Times, a general information book--an encyclopedia, and an electronic database. They are asked to read each article and write down the key points in the left-hand column of their double-entry notebook and write their reactions, responses or comments in the right-hand column of their double-entry notebook. They come to class prepared to share their articles with their groupmates and finally they are asked to write a summary and response paper to one of the four articles for a formal grade for the assignment. This assignment requires that they first objectively synopsize the article in the left-hand column and then subjectively respond to its contents and give more feedback in the right-hand column,

thus applying the very method they have used in writing in their double-entry notebook.

4. Research proposal:

Students are asked to do a GRACE analysis of their research project and propose to further research on the subject. In their double-entry notebook, they are asked to write down the basic features of a research proposal from the class lecture and from readings in the book in the left-hand column and do a GRACE (goals, reader, argument, convention, and expression) analysis of a research proposal.

5. Progress report:

Students are asked to write in the left-hand column about the basic features of a progress report such as the use of tense--present perfect, present continuous, and the future tense to follow the time pattern. In the right-hand column, they are asked to write about a detailed GRACE analysis of their progress report and discuss the problem and questions they have encountered about the progress of their research project such as the primary research--interviews and survey and the reading and interpreting the articles found.

6. The final project report:

Students are asked to take notes on the left-hand column of their double-entry notebook the basic features of a final report such as the section separation and the format and on the right-hand column they are asked to write down a detailed GRACE analysis of their own final report. Analysis of other final reports from previous students for this class is also required.

In conclusion, both the student and the teacher have found the use of a double entry notebook to be rewarding in helping students reflect on what they learn from class notes and from reading chapters in the textbooks, in helping them create meaning by exchanging ideas from their notebook with their classmates, and in helping them to apply what they learn in completing each essay assignment

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